

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANAA 00430 171055 Z

14

ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 430

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ET, YE, PBOR, MARR, PFOR

SUBJECT: RED SEA ISLANDS: TIME STORY

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3075, ADDIS ABABA 3134;
SANAA 426

1. AS FOLLOW- UP TO SANAA REFTEL, I CALLED ON ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR SIRAGE MORNING MARCH 17 TO TRY TO ASCERTAIN FROM HIM WHY HIS GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE COME TO FEEL THIS EMBASSY WAS SUPPORTING SUBSTANCE OF " TIME " STORY. (I HAD NOT CONSULTED WITH SIRAGE BEFORE ON THE ZUQAR ISSUE IN ORDER NOT TO CROSS WIRES WITH ACTIVITIES OF EMBASSY ADDIS.) SIRAGE SAID THAT IN DISCUSSING " TIME " STORY WITH YARG FONOFF BEFORE PUBLICATION TOOK PLACE, RESPONSIBLE FONOFF OFFICIAL HAD TOLD HIM USG CONSIDERED STORY VALID AND HE HAD SO REPORTED.
 2. I REVIEWED FOR SIRAGE THE SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH YARG OFFICIALS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE POINTING OUT THAT WE HAD STRESSED FROM OUTSET (1) OUR BELIEF THAT REPORT IMPLAUSIBLE AND WASHINGTON' S SUBSEQUENT CONFIRMATION THAT THERE NO SUBSTANTIATING INFO; AND (2) OUR HOPE THAT AS FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS WITH LARGER COMMON INTERESTS
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PAGE 02 SANAA 00430 171055 Z

AT STAKE, ETHIOPIA AND YAR COULD HANDLE PUBLICITY, WHEN AND IF IT CAME, IN SUCH MANNER AS NOT TO ENDANGER THEIR RELATIONSHIP.

3. AMBASSADOR SIRAGE AND I AGREED THAT HIS SOURCE IN YARG HAD PERHAPS PLAYED TOO CLEVER BY HALF IN EFFORT TO CATCH ETHIOPIA OFF BASE BY CITING ALLEGED U. S. SUPPORT FOR SUBSTANCE OF " TIME" ALLEGATION.

4. SIRAGE CABLING ADDIS TO REPORT OUR CONVERSATION.

5. FROM SIRAGE, AND SUBSEQUENTLY YARG ACTING FONMIN AL- AKWA, I LEARNED THAT EVENING MARCH 16 SIRAGE HAD INFORMED ACTING FONMIN, ON INSTRUCTIONS OF EMPEROR, THAT IEG APPROVES IMMEDIATE UNILATERAL YARG RECONNAISSANCE, BY ANY MEANS DESIRED, TO ZUQAR AND ALL OTHER RED SEA ISLANDS DEMONSTRABLY CLOSER TO YAR SHORE THAN ETHIOPIA. AS REGARDS ISLANDS CLOSER TO ETHIOPIAN SHORE, IEG VOLUNTEERS UNQUALIFIED GUARANTEE THAT THESE HARBOR NO ISRAELI INSTALLATIONS OF ANY SORT. IEG WILL WELCOME FRIENDLY NEGOTIATIONS TO RESOLVE STATUS ALL ISLANDS.

6. AL- AKWA TOLD ME YARG AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE OF ISLANDS WILL TAKE PLACE MARCH 17. YARG VERY PLEASED WITH COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF IEG IN THIS MATTER. THROUGH FONOFF SECRETARY AL- KHODR, AL- AKWA WILL TELEPHONE US EXPECTED NEGATIVE RESULTS OF RECONNAISSANCE AS SOON AS THESE ARE AVAILABLE. CRAWFORD

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